

Questions and Answers about **Meningitis** “Viral”

Q **What is Meningitis?**

A Meningitis is an infection of the lining of the brain and the spinal cord. Meningitis is usually caused by either **viruses** or **bacteria**. It is important to know which type of meningitis a person has because the seriousness and treatment of these infections are different.

Q **What is viral Meningitis?**

A Viral meningitis can be caused by many different viruses. These viruses are spread by contact with the infected person's saliva (spit), nose mucus (snot) or feces. This usually happens when someone shakes hands with the infected person, or comes in contact with something the infected person has handled and then rubs his or her own nose, mouth, or eyes.

Q **What are the signs and symptoms of viral Meningitis?**

A Viral meningitis is serious, but it rarely causes death. Viral meningitis usually does not result in permanent damage to the brain and spinal cord. Usually, the symptoms last 7 to 10 days and people recover completely.

The signs and symptoms for meningitis vary from person to person. The signs and symptoms of viral and bacterial meningitis are often the same. However, NOT everyone has all the symptoms. The symptoms and signs are:

- Fever
- Bad headaches
- Stiff neck
- Throwing up or feeling like you will
- Confusion and feeling sleepy
- In infants the signs include crankiness, sleepiness and poor eating

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Q Is there treatment for viral Meningitis?

A There is NO specific treatment for most types of viral meningitis. Most people get better on their own. Treatment is plenty of bed rest, plenty of fluids and medicine to relieve fever and headache.

Q How do I prevent viral Meningitis?

A Many people are exposed to viruses that may cause viral meningitis, but very few actually develop meningitis. By following some simple personal hygiene rules viral meningitis may be prevented.

To help prevent viral Meningitis:

- Wash hands before preparing foods.
- Wash hands before eating and after coughing and sneezing.
- Wash hands after using the toilet and changing diapers.
- Wash your hands before and after touching your nose or mouth.
- Avoid sharing eating utensils, cigarettes, lipstick, food, sports water bottles and any other items that may be contaminated by spit.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.

10/00

Your local Public Health Center is:

